



Chapter 1

Purpose and Need

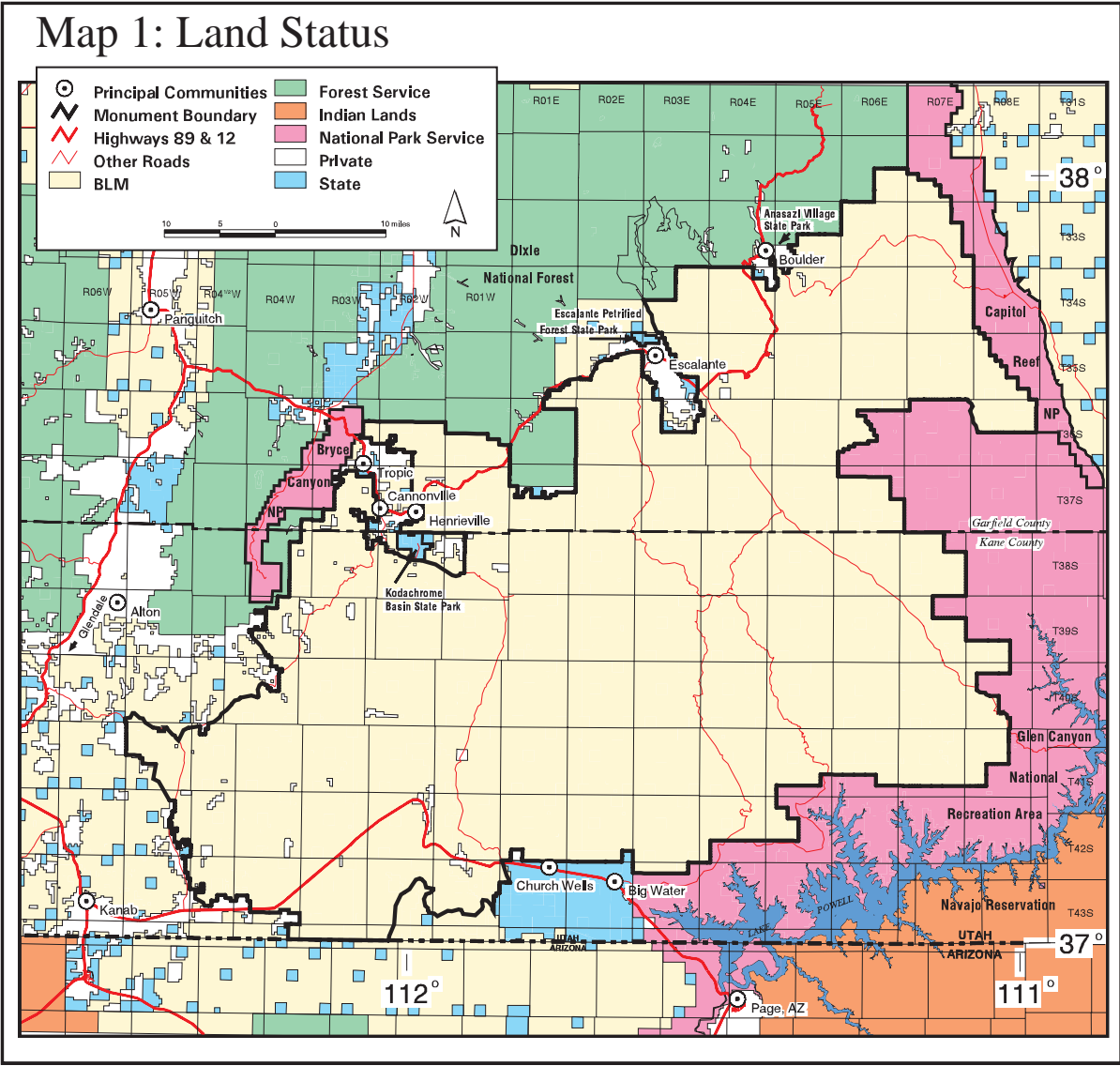
Introduction

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) was established on September 18, 1996 when President Clinton issued a Proclamation under the provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906. Pursuant to the Proclamation, this Management Plan sets forth the general vision and objectives for management of public lands and associated resources within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. This Plan supercedes the following documents for the

decisions covered by this Plan: Vermilion Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1981), Escalante MFP (1981), and Paria MFP (1981).

Setting

The Monument includes about 1,870,000 acres of Federal land in south-central Utah (Map 1). There are approximately 15,000 acres of land within the Monument boundary that are privately owned. Approximately 68 percent of the Monument is in Kane County,



while the remaining 32 percent is in Garfield County. About 49 percent of Kane County and 18 percent of Garfield County lie within the Monument boundary. The Monument is primarily surrounded by Federal lands. Dixie National Forest borders the Monument to the north, Capitol Reef National Park to the east, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the east and southeast, Bryce Canyon National Park to the northwest, and other Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands to the south and west. Kodachrome Basin State Park also adjoins the Monument.

Since designation of the Monument, two Federal laws have been passed which have affected its size. In May 1998, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Utah Governor Michael Leavitt negotiated a land exchange to transfer all State school trust lands within the Monument to the Federal government, as well as the trust lands in the National Forests, National Parks and Indian Reservations in Utah. On October 31, 1998 President Clinton signed the Utah Schools and Lands Exchange Act (Public Law 105-335) which legislated this exchange. The Utah Schools and Land Exchange Act resulted in the addition of 176,699 acres of State school trust lands and 24,000 acres of mineral interest to the Monument. On October 31, 1998, President Clinton also signed Public Law 105-355. Section 201 of this law adjusted the boundary of the Monument by including certain lands (a one-mile wide strip north of Church Wells and Big Water) and excluding certain other lands around the communities of Henrieville, Cannonville, Tropic, and Boulder. This law resulted in the addition of approximately 5,500 acres to the Monument.

Purpose and Need for Action

The Monument was created to protect a spectacular array of historic, biological, geological, paleontological, and archaeological objects. These treasures, individually and collectively, in the context of the natural environment that supports and protects them, are the Monument resources discussed throughout this document.

The Proclamation, which is the principal direction for management of the Monument, clearly dictates that the BLM manage the Monument for “the purpose of protecting the objects identified.” All other considerations are secondary to that edict.

The Proclamation governs how the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 will be applied

within the Monument. FLPMA directs the BLM to manage public land on the basis of multiple use and “in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archaeological values.”

The term “multiple use” refers to the “harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment.” Multiple use involves managing an area for various benefits, recognizing that the establishment of land use priorities and exclusive uses in certain areas is necessary to ensure that multiple uses can occur harmoniously across a landscape.

The Proclamation, FLPMA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and other mandates provide the direction for the preparation of a management plan for the Monument. Within this guidance, many decisions remain about how best to protect Monument resources and address the major issues surrounding Monument management. The Presidential Proclamation directed the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a plan in order to begin making those decisions. This Plan fulfills that directive by guiding management activities within the Monument and providing for the protection of Monument resources. It proposes to do so in a manner that creates opportunities for public discovery and education, sets a precedent for progressive public land stewardship, incorporates input from the scientific community and the public at large, and reflects the National significance of these resources.

The purpose of this Plan is to provide both a set of decisions outlining management direction and to create a framework for future planning and decision making. Its scope is necessarily broad, since it is a general framework document that will guide the overall management of activities within the Monument, as well as the use and protection of Monument resources. As in the case of any resource management plan, subsequent site specific and more detailed planning will take place for certain geographic areas and resources within the Monument in conformance with this Management Plan. The major management emphases in the Approved Plan include:

- Management of uses to protect and prevent damage to Monument resources (archaeological, historic, biological, paleontological, geologic resources).
- Facilitation of appropriate scientific research activities.
- Designation of a transportation system for the Monument and prohibition of all cross-country vehicle travel.

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- Identification of protection measures for special status plant and animal species, riparian areas, and other special resources.
- Identification of measures to ensure water is available for the proper care and management of objects in the Monument.
- Accommodation of recreation by providing minor recreation facilities for visitors. Major visitor facilities will be located in surrounding communities in order to protect resources and promote economic development in the communities.
- Establishment of a Monument Advisory Committee (chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act) to advise managers via an adaptive management strategy for implementing the Plan.
- Commitments to work with local and State governments, Native American Indian tribes, organizations, and Federal agencies to manage lands or programs for mutual benefit consistent with other Plan decisions and objectives.
- Recommendation of approximately 252 miles of river segments as suitable for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

There are several areas for which major decisions have been deferred. For example, because Monument designation does not affect existing permits or leases for, or levels of, livestock grazing, grazing will ultimately be addressed after the completion of assessments for each grazing allotment and the preparation of new allotment management plans. Similarly, due to litigation and the timetable mandated by the Proclamation, this Plan does not offer recommendations for new Wilderness Study Areas or recommendations for legislative action regarding existing Wilderness Study Areas. This Plan also does not make specific decisions concerning valid existing rights that may be asserted in the future under various authorities. Instead, as outlined in Chapter 2, the BLM will periodically verify the status of valid existing rights. When any action is proposed concerning these assertions, the BLM will analyze all potential impacts in order to provide a basis for decision making.

General Direction

This Management Plan is founded on the directions outlined in the BLM 1997 Strategic Plan. All lands administered by the BLM, including Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument, are managed to achieve this mission:

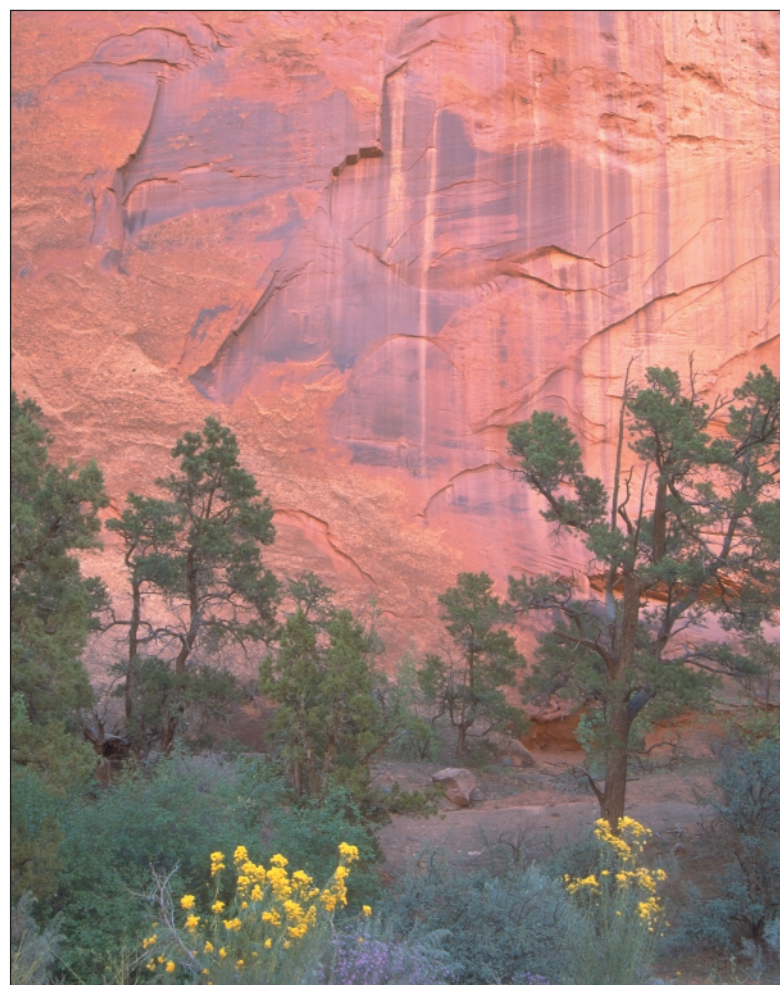
Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations by:

- serving current and future publics;

- restoring and maintaining the health of the land;
- promoting collaborative land and resource management; and
- improving business practices and human resource management.

Overall Vision

Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument is unique among the public lands managed by the BLM. Its size, resources and remote character provide a spectacular array of scientific, public education, and exploration opportunities. It also has a purpose, delineated in the Presidential Proclamation, that is more specific than other BLM administered lands. The following two basic precepts provide the overall vision for future management of this very special place.



Long Canyon (photo by Jerry Sintz)

1. First and foremost, the Monument remains a frontier. The remote and undeveloped character of the Monument is responsible for the existence and quality of most of the scientific and historic resources described in the Presidential Proclamation. Safeguarding the remote and undeveloped frontier character of the Monument is essential to the protection of the scientific and historic resources as required by the Proclamation.
2. Second, the Monument provides an unparalleled opportunity for the study of scientific and historic resources. In addition to the study of specific scientific resources, this setting allows study of such important issues as: understanding ecological and climatic change over time; increasing our understanding of the interactions between humans and their environment; improving land management practices; and achieving a properly functioning, healthy, and biologically diverse landscape. Scientific study will be supported and encouraged, but potentially intrusive or destructive investigations will be carefully reviewed to avoid conflicts with the BLM's responsibility to protect and preserve scientific and historic Monument resources.

Within these two basic precepts, the Proclamation and management policy specify that other activities can and should continue to occur. Four additional statements round out the overall vision for GSENM.

- While much of the Monument exhibits qualities where the Earth and its community of life show little evidence of human influence, it is also true that generations of people have used lands within the Monument for many different purposes. The Proclamation directed that the Monument remain open to certain specific uses under existing laws and regulations. These include valid existing rights, hunting, fishing, grazing and pre-existing authorizations. To the extent consistent with existing rights, these uses will be managed in a manner that protects Monument resources.
- Monument Management and staff will work with local communities to provide needed infrastructure development such as communications sites and utility rights-of-way. As with other uses, this type of development will be limited to small areas of the Monument. In addition, it must be done in a

manner that will not cause serious impacts to protected resources or significantly change the undeveloped character of the Monument.

- While interpretation and recreation will be accommodated, and in some areas developed, the intention of these management activities will be to contribute to the protection and understanding of Monument resources. Developed recreational and interpretive sites will be limited to small areas of the Monument. At these sites visitors can experience, and come to better understand, the scientific resources of the Monument and the process and importance of scientific research in improving our knowledge of natural systems. This will be accomplished without causing serious impacts to the resources themselves. Undeveloped recreation will be accommodated as long as no significant impacts to Monument resources will occur. Limits on large groups, commercial uses, and even limits on overall numbers of individuals will be used when needed to prevent impacts to Monument resources.
- Finally, the short history of the Monument has already established a pattern for an inclusive and collaborative effort to protect, identify, assess, and where appropriate, research or interpret resources found in GSENM. The Monument staff will continue to work with local, state and Federal partners, scientists, Native American Indians, and the public to refine management practices that will insure protection, facilitate scientific and historic research, respect authorized uses, and allow appropriate visitation.

Public Participation and Collaboration

The BLM is committed to providing opportunities for meaningful participation in resource management planning processes. Effective planning processes provide opportunities for the public to become involved early, to comment on draft land use plans, and to ensure that the BLM has met the provisions of NEPA. The BLM has maintained an ongoing public participation process in the development of this Monument Management Plan.

Throughout this planning process, extra effort has been expended to ensure meaningful public participation. Publications such as the visions kit and update letters were integral in the dissemination of information to a mailing list that has expanded to over 10,000

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interested parties. Forums such as the science symposium, scoping workshops, and open house sessions provided an opportunity to gather and disseminate information on a more personal level.

Additionally, all of the information provided in printed publications and at the information meetings was available on the Monument's Internet homepage. This homepage also provided the draft and proposed documents on-line for quick and easy access to a broad audience.

To more fully include the State of Utah in the planning process, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt invited Governor Micheal

Leavitt to nominate members to the Planning Team. The Governor proposed five professionals who became part of the Planning Team. These professionals include a geologist, paleontologist, historian, wildlife biologist, and a community planner. In addition, the State of Utah Automated Geographic Resource Center provided support through a cooperative agreement. The BLM also consulted with tribal officials throughout the planning process via information letters, telephone calls, meetings, and field trips.

In order to ensure that decisions are more meaningful and effective, the BLM intends to extend the collaborative and inclusive nature of the planning process into implementation of this Plan.

